



CCM 2012 Testimony

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ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

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The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent over 90% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate the opportunity to testify on bills of interest to towns and cities.

Senate Bill 23 "An Act Enhancing Emergency Preparedness and Response"
House Bill 5544 "An Act Concerning Storm Preparation and Emergency Response"
Senate Bill 450 "An Act Concerning Energy Conservation and Renewable Energy"

CCM supports SB 23, HB 5544, and SB 450 as reasonable measures to address the deficiencies in emergency response and recovery experienced by local officials as a result of Tropical Storm Irene and last October's Nor'easter.

- ✦ **SB 23:** would, among other things (1) authorize the State's regulatory authority to "establish minimum standards of performance for utilities" and (2) establish a \$5 million micro-grid pilot program for interested towns and cities to apply.
- ✦ **HB 5544:** would also seek to establish certain performance standards and create a micro-grid pilot program – and, among other things, codify procedures and standards for (1) tree trimming policies conducted by private utility companies, and (2) private utilities' staffing levels and their coordination and communication with municipalities. HB 5544 would also require (1) appropriate employees of the State's regulatory authority to be training under the federal "NIMS" system, (2) telecommunications companies to maintain back-up generators for critical cell towers or antennas, and (3) that all private utility companies submit annual "emergency response and infrastructure reports."
- ✦ **SB 450:** would, among other things, require each electric distribution company to submit a ten- year plan to PURA to strengthen their utility infrastructures performance and resiliency, and stipulates that such a plan include strategies for evaluating and preparing storm response resources, planning and drilling exercises with each municipality and the state and any other activity necessary to prepare for any natural disaster.

It is no secret that all emergencies, either man-made or natural disasters, start locally and end locally. To this end, Connecticut's local officials have set the standard for emergency preparedness, response and recovery from all hazards. CCM welcomes the proposals set forth in SB 23, HB 5544 and SB 450 as astute enhancements to our hometowns' emergency plans, and prudent means of ensuring the safety of our communities.

As conveyed by many local officials during the hearings of the Governor's Two-Storm panel – the private utilities-local government partnership is in need of repair – most noted aspects are in:

- *Coordination and communication* -- chains-of-command within private utilities need to be clearly articulated between utility officials and their municipal counterparts. The municipal-utility liaison model was deemed by a majority of local officials, as being helpful yet, limited during the recovery process. The authorities and responsibilities of these key officials should be more clearly defined in order to be more effective. **Utility liaisons should also be embedded within each community, year-round – and included in the local emergency management planning process – from preparation to response to recovery.** Liaison training and equipment was also cited as needing improvement in order to better assist towns and cities.
- *Information sharing* -- municipal officials also report that, since the most recent storms, the importance of **improving the collection and dissemination of local utility data, possibly via GIS mapping capabilities** (i.e., the location of major circuits/substations in relation to local priority restoration points – correlated with the specific causes and locations of power outages) should be a key focus. As addressed in these bills -- local officials' real-time access to such information could provide their field crews with a concrete game plan for restoration.

There is no entity – public or private -- involved in emergency preparedness that is immune to improving the process and procedures for responding and recovering from an event. To this end, CCM supports the proposals within these bills, and is anxious to continue to work with our state and private partners toward reasonable solutions and alternatives that will enhance the safety and services our residents rely upon.

CCM urges the Committee to *favorably report* SB 23, HB 5544, and SB 450.

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If you have any questions, please contact Donna Hamzy, Legislative Associate of CCM
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